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S E C R E T OTTAWA 000637

SIPDIS

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FOR SECRETARY RICE FROM AMBASSADOR CELLUCCI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/01/2015

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SUBJECT: GOC AT PAINS TO DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT TO SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

REF: OTTAWA 00572

Classified By: Amb Paul Cellucci for Reasons 1.4 (A) (B) and (D).

1. (S/NF) Privy Council Clerk Alex Himelfarb contacted me on February 28 to stress yet again his concern that the government's good-faith effort to beef up its defense capabilities will get lost in the reporting on the poorly managed missile defense decision. First Himelfarb, then the PM's Chief of Staff, Tim Murphy, and finally Prime Minister Martin called me last Wednesday (Feb. 23) about missile defense; all went to great lengths to elaborate on the C\$ 12.8 billion increase in defense spending and to reaffirm this government's determination and desire to stand with us in every other way they could, despite the minority status of the government.

2. (S/NF) On the day he was to appear before the commission investigating the sponsorship scandal, Himelfarb still found it necessary to give me a preview of the defense policy review. He was concerned that the conversation remain close hold, as Parliament had not yet been briefed on the defense policy review and it would cause big political trouble if word got out that the government had discussed the review outside of Canadian circles. Re-emphasizing the seriousness of Canada's proposed defense expenditure increases, Himelfarb laid out the premises of the defense policy review as it was reflected in the spending figures. He flagged the following spending priorities:

- new forces of 5000 personnel and 3000 reserve; enhancement of Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) capabilities, greater funding for the Coast Guard, more for signals intelligence, more for JTF-2 special forces;
- an expeditionary contingency task force ready to deploy anywhere in the world within 10 days;
- medium/heavy lift helicopters;
- marine vessel acquisitions, and acquisitions for domestic, in-theater and global airlift capacity.

3. (S/NF) Himelfarb noted that the review highlights its commitment to North America defense. The government will set up a Canada Command (like our own NorthCom) with a counterterrorism emphasis. In this document, Martin wants to stress the indivisibility of North America security and Canada's willingness to put up its share for it. The review will also stress commitment to institutions of North America defense, specifically mentioning PJBD and the Binational Planning Group. The government really wants to move forward on NORAD renewal and is still very concerned about information sharing. Outside of North America, they will focus on regional hot spots such as Haiti, Sudan, Middle East.

4. (S/NF) Incoming Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, told me that this long-delayed review would likely come out before the end of March, citing the imperative that with the BMD decision they move quickly on defense matters. He was very pleased with the new funding, even though much of it was loaded in the out-years. Deputy Minister of Defence Ward Elcock said they could not front load the budget increases since they could not absorb that kind of procurement funding so quickly. But those decisions will be taken now, locked in through contract, and paid for in the ensuing years.

4. (S/NF) Comment) Conversations prior to last week's missile defense decision indicated the Canadians knew there would be consequences from such a decision, not a planned retribution, but at the very least fallout in attitudes and perceptions towards Canada. They hope that these new budget priorities in defense will help to reassure us of their commitment to the military partnership. The fact is, no matter how badly they handled this missile decision (leading us to believe repeatedly that they would be with us,) the increased defense commitments are good news and in our interests. End comment

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